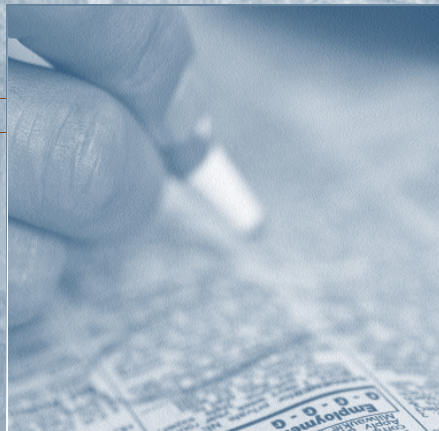
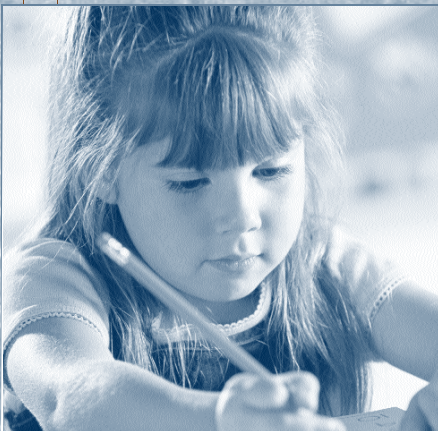


Session Report



from
**Representative
Ryan Dvorak**





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Highlights of the new budget

I am pleased that this year's work on the budget was marked by a spirit of bipartisanship. House Enrolled Act 1001 ensures fiscal responsibility in a time of falling state revenues and increasing demands on education and economic development. Some highlights are given below.

HEA 1001 increases school funding. It provides a 2.3 percent increase in K-12 tuition support in FY 04 and 1.9 percent in FY 05 to maintain current programs.



HEA 1001 paves the way to create more jobs. It

includes elements of the Energize

Indiana Program, which will create new, high-paying jobs and diversify Indiana's economy. It also includes university programs to enhance life sciences, research and technology at our research institutions, as well as funding economic development and maintaining CHOICE and Hoosier Rx.

HEA 1001 cuts state government spending. It controls prison spending

by diverting nonviolent offenders to community corrections programs and controls Medicaid spending.

I am most encouraged that we were able to do all of this without raising a single general state tax.

Cooperative spirit brings success to 2003 session

Now that the 2003 session of the Indiana General Assembly has come to a close, it is a good time to review what we have accomplished this year.

Over the past four months, 286 measures cleared both chambers and were sent to the governor for final approval. Of that total, 169 bills and two joint resolutions came from the House and 114 bills and one joint resolution from the Senate.

But sheer numbers do not tell the complete story. I believe this session will be remembered for how lawmakers set partisan politics aside to pass major legislation at a time when many states are simply trying to recover from the national recession.

House Enrolled Act 1001, which contains a \$22.7 billion biennial state budget and an economic development program, clearly reflects the efforts of Republicans and Democrats from the Indiana House and Senate to work together to benefit Hoosiers. I've included budget highlights in the article at left. Also noted in this newsletter are ways in which we have made progress in health care and employment.

Below are some of our other accomplishments from this year.

- **CONSUMER PROTECTION** – HEA 1083 requires those who send unsolicited e-mail, better known as "spam," to clearly identify the mail as an ad and to honor the wishes of those who no longer want to receive the spam. SEA 230 provides a means for victims of identity theft to ensure tainted credit histories are properly restored and expands the legal definition of identity theft to make prosecutions of the crime easier.

- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** – HEA 1558 ensures that a victim of domestic or family violence who has missed work will not be disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance compensation. HEA 1849 prohibits anyone convicted of a crime of domestic violence from possessing a firearm, even after that person's right to vote and serve on a jury has been restored.

- **PROTECTING CHILDREN** – HEA 1689 allows the state to immediately close a day care home or center and notify parents and guardians if violations of health and safety codes are found that risk the lives of children there.

- **EDUCATION** – The state budget provides funding increases for both K-12 and our colleges and universities. SEA 501 enables charter schools to borrow money from the state to pay for startup costs and expansion, but limits the number of those schools until the state's financial situation improves.

Although this year's session is over, I am still available to answer your questions about these or other issues pertaining to state government. Additionally, if you would like to receive periodic e-mail updates about state issues, send me a note at eupdate08@in.gov. I hope you'll stay in touch.

Dvorak helping Hoosier workers

Two initiatives passed in the 2003 legislative session will help Indiana workers get the skills they need to help them find and retain jobs. These measures will upgrade the way we process unemployment benefits, improve those benefits, and give a boost to one of this state's major job training programs.

The biennial state budget (House Enrolled Act 1001) allocates federal Reed Act funds to **modernize the state's unemployment insurance system**, provide skills assessments for Hoosier workers and fund local Workforce One offices.

Senate Enrolled Act 486 provides an **increase in weekly unemployment insurance benefits** from \$336 to \$390 over the next three years, and ensures that the **Skills 2016 job training program** created by the Legislature in 2001 will remain in operation.

At a time when the national economy remains in a recession, and the job

market is as difficult as it has ever been, this act provides the means for people to gain the additional skills needed in order to find work, and strengthens the support system that can keep them afloat as they find new jobs.

I am particularly pleased that we have extended the life of Skills 2016. It is safe to say that this program has exceeded all of our expectations in giving workers a chance to learn new skills that make them more attractive on the job market.

We have been able to train many people in a number of industrial and building trades — such as electricians, plumbers and pipe fitters — through apprenticeship programs approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. As they have been gaining new skills, they also have been earning the credits that enable them to receive Associate's degrees through Ivy Tech and other institutions.



Rep. Dvorak works on legislation in the House Chamber.

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New laws improve Hoosier health care



A number of major initiatives impacting the quality of health care for Hoosiers were passed during the 2003 legislative session.

Senate Enrolled Act 493 establishes a **caretaker support program** to help people who provide ongoing care for someone who suffers from Alzheimer's or another illness that requires special needs. Assistance would include access to counseling services, support groups

and respite care. The same act calls for creation of a **long-term care program that will help expand availability of home health care services**.

SEA 220 authorizes the Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning to **implement the federal Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)**, which also helps make it easier for older Hoosiers to receive the health care they need in their own homes.

HEA 1749 makes changes to the Indiana Comprehensive Health Insurance Association (ICHIA) program that **assists people who have problems getting or keeping insurance due to medical conditions**. The act will make it easier to direct care to people who need it the most and make sure the program operates in a more cost-efficient manner.

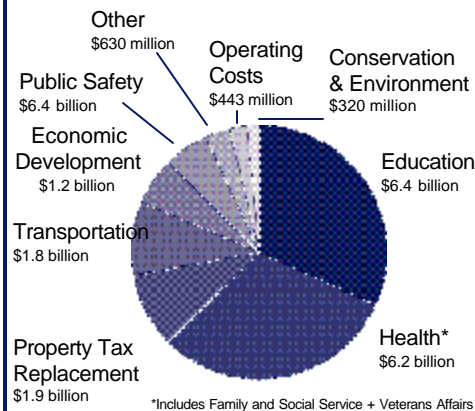
Hoosiers on lower incomes also will have improved access to health care through HEA 1643, which enables the state to work with a non-profit group to provide care to uninsured residents. The program will coordinate volunteered

medical services with access to free prescription drugs to those who qualify.

Other measures will allow a woman to breast feed a child in public (HEA 1510), require children to be immunized against chicken pox (HEA 1702) and require insurers to provide coverage for treatment of substance abuse and addiction if that treatment is part of addressing a mental illness (HEA 1135).

Where does the money go?

2003-2004 state budget expenditures



Earlier this year, the State Supreme Court issued a decision in the case of South Bend vs. Kimsey that effectively ruled St. Joseph County's unique annexation law to be unconstitutional.

In 1993, the Legislature passed the law applying only to St. Joseph County that allowed for a majority (over 50%) of residents in an area being considered for forced annexation to stop the procedure from going forth.

opposed to it. This 1999 law applied everywhere except St. Joseph County (because St. Joe already had its own annexation law).

When the Supreme Court struck down the St. Joseph County law, they effectively left St. Joseph County the only county in the entire state without any

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forced annexation protection. Therefore, I quickly drafted legislation that would include St. Joseph County under the same protection enjoyed by the rest of the state. That bill, HB 2032, passed the House of Representatives, and was eventually signed into law by Governor O'Bannon.

made it through the legislative process to become law. It is an important law that restores at least a basic level of protection for County residents. However, I am also working with several of my colleagues now to find even better long-term solutions.

In my mind, a majority vote has always been the acceptable measure of the will of the people. A simple majority should be enough to stop the involuntary annexation of one area under the governmental jurisdiction of another. I will continue to work on this and other issues of importance to our community, and always welcome your feedback.

Helping Hoosier families

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